

Story 914 1961-62 Tape 72)

Narrator: Mehmet Doğan, member of labor gang on construction work

Location: Village and kaza not recorded; Province of Konya; but tale recorded at Izmir, job site.

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The Gold-Bearing, Power-Giving Entrails of the Magic Bird

Once there was a couple who were so poor that they were barely able to survive. To earn enough to buy some food, the husband cut firewood in the forest, carried it on his back to the nearest town, and there sold it. One day this man found an egg in the forest. When he took it to town, along with his load of wood, he showed it to some people in the marketplace. There was a Jew among those people, and this Jew said to the woodcutter, "I shall give you a silver Mecidiye<sup>1</sup> for that egg."

"Are you joking?" asked the woodcutter.

"I shall give you two silver Mecidiyes for it," said the Jew.

"You must be joking."

"I'll give you three."

<sup>1</sup>A silver coin issued in the time of Sultan Abdülmecit I (1839-61) and worth twenty-five piastres. Inasmuch as all Mecidiyes were made of silver, it is a redundancy to say silver Mecidiye.

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The poor peasant had no way of knowing anything about the value of his egg. He thought that it was worthless. He was amazed when the Jew finally paid him twenty-five Mecidiyes it. As soon as he got the money in his hands, he ran away from the marketplace, fearing that they might take it back again. He went to a different market and there bought twenty-five Mecidiyes' worth of food supplies. It was almost more than he could carry home.

When his wife returned home and looked at the food stacked in the kitchen, she could hardly believe what she saw. "Where did you get all of this food?" she asked

"Today I found in the forest an egg that looked like such-and-such. When I took that egg to a marketplace in town, I was given twenty-five silver Mecidiyes for it by a Jew there. With that money I was able to buy all of this food."

"I also found such an egg today," said his wife, and she showed him an egg that looked exactly like the one that he found. Taking this second egg to town, these peasants sold it to the same Jew for the same price he had paid for first. Returning to the places they had found these eggs, they searched the ground carefully until they found several more eggs, all of which they sold at the same good price.

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After a while it occurred to the peasant and his wife that they might catch the bird that laid such valuable eggs and take it to their home. "It could make us rich," the man said. Accordingly, when they went to the forest the next time, the man and his wife hid near the foot of a large tree and waited there. The bird came along, and when the poor creature was sitting on her nest, they pounced upon her and captured her. Taking her home, they placed her in a cage, where every day she laid an egg.

They became so rich selling these eggs that it was not long before the man was expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. They had two sons by that time. The husband said to his wife, "After hiring a maid for you, I shall leave you and our sons here, and I shall go to Mecca on a pilgrimage

After he had been gone for a while, his wife began to feel lonely and desired some companionship. The Jew who had been buying their eggs wondered why the eggs stopped coming, and so he decided to go and search for the man who had brought them. Locating the former woodcutter's house, he walked past it. As he did, he noticed the bird that laid the valuable eggs. He also noticed the man's wife and winked at her. He said to the woman, "If you will kill that bird and cook it for me, I shall come in to you."

"I'll kill a hen for you," she said.

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no, I want that particular bird."

Finally the woman agreed to kill that bird, and the Jew came inside. The woman said to her maid, "Kill this bird, fry it, and place it on the table."

The maid took the bird outside and, as the two children watched, she cut its throat. She killed the bird, cleaned it, and gave the heart to the one child and the liver to the other. She then fried the rest and placed it on the table.

But when the bird was served, the Jew objected, saying, "What can I do with this bird? I'd rather buy a hen for fifteen liras. What did you do with the heart and liver of this bird?"

The maid said, "I gave one of them to Ahmet and the other to Mehmet, and they ate them

When the Jew heard this, he became <sup>angry</sup> and got up to leave. "No, you won't leave," said the woman.

"Yes, I will," said the Jew

The woman finally suggested, "You can kill these children and take the organs of the bird from their stomach."

The Jew took the children to a nearby mountain to kill them, but when the time came to do this, he could not bear to do it. He said to them, "I have eaten your father's bread, and so I cannot kill you. Now go!"

The Jew then bought a cock and killed it. He dipped

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*Shady game*  
the shirts of the two boys in the blood of the cock and took these to their mother, saying, "I have killed your children Here are their bloody shirts. But they had already digested the organs of the bird, and so I could not find them." He then left

*from lower  
Chickadee*  
The children on the mountain did not know what to do When they could not find their way home, they sat down and cried. There they fell asleep when evening came. When the younger son awakened during the night, he looked for his brother but could not find him. While searching for him this younger brother came across a road. He followed that road, and eventually it led him to Istanbul.

*50-54 50,53-54*  
The boy first became an apprentice in a helva shop. After working for some time in the helva shop, he went to a coffee-50-5 house and became an apprentice there. At first he worked only for his food, but more customers began coming to the coffeehouse after he started working there. The owner was so pleased at this that he said to the boy, "You may sleep in the coffeehouse, and I shall come in the morning to awaken you."

In the morning the owner came to the coffeehouse and said, "Here Take this bucket and get some water. I shall

<sup>2</sup>A confection made with sesame oil, honey, and flour  
It is a favorite candy and dessert of Turkish people.

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up your bed." While the man was rolling up the bed,<sup>3</sup> he found in it some money tied in a piece of cloth. Untying the cloth, he found in it twenty-five Mecidiyes. He put the money in his pocket, and when the boy returned with the water, he asked him, "Did anyone come in here last night after I closed the coffeehouse?"

"No," said the boy

The following morning the coffeehouse owner again found twenty-five Mecidiyes tied in a piece of cloth. Again he asked, "Did anyone come into the coffeehouse last night after I closed it?"

"No."

That night the owner himself slept in the coffeehouse to see who it was who came and left during the night. No one came. In the morning the owner said to the boy, "You go and get a bucket of water, and I shall roll up your bed." Once again he found the same amount of money in the bed, and the owner then concluded that his apprentice had some kind of miraculous power. He then said to the young man, "Take this money and go to a butcher shop and buy two kilos of meat

take that meat to my house at such-and-such an address, and tell my wife to cook it. When it is cooked, bring it back here."

<sup>3</sup>Bed here means a mattress and blanket roll spread on the floor

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The owner actually had two wives. After the young man had bought the meat, he went to the owner's house and knocked on the door. When a woman opened the door, he said, "Your husband has sent this meat to be cooked. I am to take it back to him when it is ready."

"I see!" she said. "And he spent the night with you while we two women here stared at the ceiling!" These two women gave the apprentice a good beating, and he returned to the coffeehouse crying.

are you crying, son?" asked the owner.

shouldn't I cry? Your wives beat me."

"I'll go right home now and teach them how to behave.

The young man followed the owner to see if he would really beat his wives.

the owner arrived home, he asked his wives, "Why did you beat that child?"

spent the night with him while we were here alone staring at the ceiling."

"I spent the night with him only to test him, because I have received seventy-five Mecidiyes through him in three days. He seems to be Hızır.<sup>4</sup> Why did you beat him? The boy says that he wishes to leave my coffeehouse because you beat him."

<sup>4</sup>Hızır is an ancient fertility and water god to many rural Turks. To all Turks he is also a last-minute rescuer from disaster and a granter of wishes. To those with whom he is pleased Hızır gives generous rewards.

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The owner did not want his apprentice to leave, but he left anyway and sought a job elsewhere. That night he found a job at another ~~coffeehouse~~. When he awakened in the morning, he found twenty-five Mecidiyes beneath his bed. Taking these, he left and again sought another job. He worked in place after place for just one day, always leaving the following morning after he had picked up his twenty-five Mecidiyes. At last he became apprenticed to another helva maker.

By this time he had become a very handsome young man. He wore a good suit of clothes, for by now he had plenty of money after receiving twenty-five silver coins for a great many mornings. Everyone who heard about this handsome young man came to the helva shop just to get a look at him. In fact, there was often a whole line of people waiting to see him.

Directly across the street from the helva shop lived a girl who was considered the most beautiful girl in the world. <sup>53-54,</sup> <sub>55\*</sub> She too had heard of the handsome apprentice. She said to her nurse, "Go across the street and tell the apprentice in the helva shop to package up some helva and deliver it to me personally."

When the nurse took these directions to the apprentice, he said, "I am very busy here, and I do not have time to deliver helva to your lady. Tell her to come and get her own



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helva." The girl sent repeated requests for the apprentice to bring her some helva, and he finally could no longer resist her request. He not only delivered helva to her, but he also began spending nights at her home

One night she asked him, "What is the source of all your wealth? Surely you do not earn it all as an apprentice."

After he had explained the whole thing to the girl, he fell asleep. She then dipped a feather in vinegar and inserted it into his nose. The young man sneezed in his sleep, and when he sneezed, the liver of the magic bird came out through his nose. The most beautiful girl then swallowed the liver and had the young man thrown out of her mansion. Although he tried repeatedly to get back inside, he could not do so

Leaving her mansion, the young man came upon two giants who were fighting with each other. He tried to run away before they saw him, but he started too late. They saw him and chased him until they caught him. "What do you want with me?" he asked.

"We want you to help us settle our quarrel.

"Why are you quarreling?"

"Our father has died and left us his only property: a stick, a cap, and a small carpet. We cannot decide how to divide this property between us. That is why we are fighting. We want you to help us divide it." The two giants did not

*magic  
object*

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know that these three pieces of property were magic objects, the young man recognized them as soon as he saw them. The magic stick would beat any offender until its owner told it to stop. The magic hat would turn one into a flea if one wore it, thus making that person almost invisible. And the carpet was able to fly anywhere it was directed, carrying with it anyone who stood upon it

The young man said, "All right, I shall help you to divide these things fairly between you. I am going to throw this stick a good distance, and the one of you who can get it first and bring it back here will be its owner. Then when the stick is returned here, I shall decide which of you will

the cap and which the carpet." Picking up the stick, he threw it to the outskirts of Istanbul. After the giants raced away after the stick, the young man put the cap in his belt and stepped onto the carpet. After reciting three times the Kulhuwallahi <sup>55, 56, 57, 58</sup> prayer and once the Elham <sup>55, 56, 57, 58</sup>, he ordered the carpet, "Carry me inside the mansion of the most beautiful

<sup>5</sup> One of the most important prayers in Islam, it comes from Chapter CXII of the Koran, titled "The Declaration of God's Unity." --"In the name of the Most Merciful God. Say, 'God is one God, the eternal God; he begetteth not, neither is he begotten, and there is not anyone like unto him.'" --Credited with having special potency, this prayer is, in folktales, recited as a kind of incantation when magic is being employed.

<sup>6</sup> The Elham is the opening sura (chapter) of the Koran, often called by its Arabic name, Fatihe or Al-Fatihah.

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girl."

When the young man appeared inside her mansion, the most beautiful girl was very surprised to see him. He said to her, "I spent the whole night in your mansion, and now I would like to have you sit on my carpet for one hour with me." Forcing the girl to sit on the carpet, he recited the Kulhuwallahi prayer three times and the Elham once. Then he said to the girl, "I want you to take us to a still-undiscovered island."

After they arrived on the island the girl said, "I wish that you had told me we were coming here. I could have brought along some food for us."

"Don't worry about food," said the young man. "I shall go and find some food for us." He then went to pick some apples from some nearby apple trees. While he was gone, the girl took the carpet, recited the necessary prayers, and disappeared with it, leaving the boy alone on the island.

When the boy ate one of the red apples, he suddenly sprouted two horns on his head that grew rapidly until they were each seven meters long. Unable to go anywhere, he lay down on the ground. When he became hungry again, he ate one of the yellow apples, and almost immediately his horns disappeared. Taking two red apples for growing horns and two yellow apples for removing horns, he put on his magic cap and

Insert image  
56, 57, 58

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*Transfer*

became a flea. He then jumped into the sea, hoping that the currents might carry him to the mainland. After floating back and forth and here and there for some time, he was finally washed up on the shore of the mainland

*transfer*

It was a long way from Istanbul, but taking off his cap and becoming a man again, he started walking in the direction of that city. Along the way he met an old man with two curious-looking sticks in his hand. The young man asked him "Will you sell me those sticks?"

"No, I cannot do that, for I use them to earn my living."

"How do you do that?"

"Well, if you recite the Kulhuwallahi prayer three times and the Elham once, and then strike a person with one of the sticks, that person will turn into an animal. Then if the person is hit with the other stick, the person will turn back into human form.

*more magic objects*

"Sell them to me," said the young man.

"No!"

*Transfer*

Turning himself into a flea again, the young man waited until the old man laid the sticks down for a moment. Then he snatched them and ran away. Returning then to his human form, he walked and walked, and a long while later he at last reached Istanbul. There he found the home of the most beautiful girl, and putting on his cap, became a flea again

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Unseen as a flea, he went through the door of the mansion and then proceeded to the girl's chamber. He walked over her body as she lay in bed, biting her here and biting her there.

The girl woke up and complained to her maids, "I don't know what is the matter with me, but I cannot sleep. There must be fleas or bedbugs or lice in my bed!" The girls searched her bed for the creatures that seemed to be bothering the girl but they found nothing. After they had gone, the flea started biting the girl again so much that she lay awake until morning. Then when he finally allowed her to fall asleep, the young man resumed his human form. Taking a feather, he dipped it in vinegar and inserted it into her nose. When she sneezed, the liver of the magic bird flew from her nostril, and the boy caught it and swallowed it again. Reciting the Kulhuwallahi three times and the Elham once, the young man then hit her with one of the magic sticks and turned her into a donkey. He then dragged the donkey onto the magic carpet and flew outside with her.

*Transforms*

There he pretended that he wanted to sell the donkey. When a water-seller came along, he said, "Father, try using this donkey for a day. Use her in your work, but do not lose her, for I want her back at the end of the day."

The old water-seller was very pleased with the work of the new donkey. She worked harder than his old donkey ever

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When he went into a restaurant to eat, however, the donkey escaped. It went directly to the palace of the padişah.

Outside that palace there was a bell attached to the of a high pole. Whenever anyone tolled that bell, it informed the padişah that someone had come to lodge a complaint. The donkey rubbed its back against the pole, shaking it enough in that way so that the bell rang

When the palace people heard the bell ring, they rushed to the windows and looked out. "Oh, it is not anything important," they said. "It is only a donkey. Hit it with a stick and drive it away." This was done, and the donkey left, but it was not long before it returned and rang the bell again. When the palace attendants saw the same donkey back again, they said, "Perhaps she does have a complaint. Let us go and see." Going to the donkey, they asked, "Do you have a complaint?"

The donkey nodded its head. When the attendants saw this, they took it inside the palace grounds and decided to have her case taken care of in the morning.

It so happened, however, that that night the padişah died. All of the viziers and court people gathered and decided upon the way in which they would choose a successor. They agreed that on the following morning when they opened the front doors of the palace, they would select as padişah the



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first person whom they saw. When they went out the next morning, they found a shabbily dressed fellow sleeping in a hollow spot in the lawn. They said to him, "Get up!"

He begged them to leave him alone. "I have done no wrong!" he pleaded.

"Come, come!" they said. "We want to make you our new padişah!"

Do you know who that new padişah was? He was the older brother of the young man we have been watching all through this tale. Because he had not been able to find any work, he had grown very poor. He had no place in which to live, and so he had just gone to sleep there on the lawn.

The following morning the new padişah said, "What business is there to be attended to? What cases are to be heard?"

"Your Majesty," said one of his attendants, "there was a donkey who had a complaint yesterday."

"Well, then, find that donkey's owner, and let us hear the complaint."

The owner of the donkey was found and brought into the presence of the padişah. After the young man had given an account of himself, the padişah realized that here was his own brother. He stopped the hearing of the case and said, "You are my brother!"

After they had been reunited and had hugged each other,

*Older brother  
who had  
eaten hard*

*Reunion  
of brother  
Recognition*

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the younger brother said, "This is not really a donkey. She is really the most beautiful girl in the world." He then hit her with the second stick, and she became a girl again.

The younger son and the most beautiful girl were married have been living happily since then. I was present at their wedding, and what a great feast we all had! I said, "I am only a poor man. Will you give me something to take along with me when I go?" They gave me a packet of food to take along with me. But on the way home a fierce dog started to attack me, and to save myself, I threw him the food.

While I was walking the rest of the way home, three apples fell from a tree: one for the teller of this tale, one for the listener, and one for me.<sup>7</sup> --Yes, they were married and now live happily, and let us hope that all of us may have our wishes granted, too.

*Tale*  
*summary* *done*

<sup>7</sup>This is a common terminal formula for the Turkish folktale, though usually the apples are said to have fallen from the sky or from heaven. There is, of course, a trace of humor in the narrator's solemnly allotting himself two of the three apples, and this too is traditional.